

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 079900  
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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 079900

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM MAYNES

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: SHUM, UNHRC, NI

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

1. THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO NIGERIA PROVIDES AN IDEAL  
OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS NIGERIA'S NEW CONCERN AND ACTIVISM  
ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. BOTH AT THE 32ND UNGA AND THE  
RECENT 34TH SESSION OF THE HRC IN GENEVA, THE NIGERIANS  
PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED IN PROMOTING  
THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. I SUGGEST THAT AT AN  
APPROPRIATE MOMENT YOU MENTION TO PRESIDENT OBASANJO OR  
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FOREIGN MINISTER GARBA OUR SUPPORT FOR THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS  
POLICIES AND ENGAGE THEM IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON MUTUAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS. A SECTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS  
INCLUDED IN THE SECRETARY'S BRIEFING MATERIALS FOR NIGERIA,  
BUT DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE  
PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING MEMO.

2. THERE FOLLOWS SOME BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND POINTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO RAISE:

BACKGROUND: NIGERIA HAS PLAYED A SUPPORTING, BUT HESITANT, ROLE IN OUR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP PRACTICAL UN HUMAN RIGHTS MACHINERY. AT THE MOST RECENT SESSION OF THE UN'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (FEBRUARY 6 TO MARCH 10) NIGERIA WAS A KEY SUPPORTER OF UNPRECEDENTED DECISIONS TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN, INTER ALIA, UGANDA, EQUATORIAL

GUINEA AND CAMBODIA. (A NIGERIAN MAY, IN FACT, BE SELECTED BY SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM TO VISIT UGANDA ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION TO DO A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION THERE. A POSSIBLE CANDIDATE, NIGERIAN JUSTICE ADDETOKUMBO ADEMOLA, HAS ALREADY DECLINED TO UNDERTAKE THE STUDY. ANOTHER NIGERIAN, SIMEAN ADEBO, IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED ALONG WITH A SIERRA LEONEAN.) MOREOVER, NIGERIA INITIATED AND PRESSED TO ADOPTION A PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS WHERE NONE PRESENTLY EXIST, E.G. AFRICA. HOWEVER, NIGERIA WAS STRONGLY RESISTANT TO OUR PROPOSAL THAT THE COMMISSION ENDORSE THE CREATION OF THE POST OF UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH THE NIGERIANS FEAR WOULD AMOUNT TO AN INVESTIGATOR WITH UN AUTHORIZATION TO EMBARRASS OR INTERVENE IN OTHER NATIONS' INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

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POINTS TO BE MADE:

-- NIGERIA HAS PLAYED, AND IS UNIQUELY SUITED TO CONTINUE, A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN FORGING AN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS.

-- WE APPRECIATE THE FORTHRIGHT ROLE PLAYED BY NIGERIA IN THE RECENTLY ENDED SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

-- THE NIGERIAN PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS INCREASING THE PRACTICAL MACHINERY FOR INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

-- WE HOPE THAT NIGERIA WILL SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF A HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS; A FUNCTION THAT IN OUR VIEW WOULD PROMOTE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT UN HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS IN CLOSE COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION WITH UN MEMBER STATES. OUR GOAL IS PRACTICAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE AND PROGRESS. WE WELCOME AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

-- WE VALUE NIGERIA'S COUNSEL AND COOPERATION AND LOOK

FORWARD TO AN EXPANDED DIALOGUE ON OUR MUTUAL INTEREST  
IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS.

-- (AS APPROPRIATE) WE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA  
WILL SUPPORT THE SELECTION OF AN EMINENT NIGERIAN  
PERSONALITY, IF THE SECRETARY GENERAL SO DECIDES, TO  
UNDERTAKE FOR THE HRC A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE HUMAN  
RIGHTS SITUATION IN UGANDA.

3. DURING YOUR VISIT TO DAKAR I SUGGEST YOU REITERATE TO

PRESIDENT SENGHOR OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF  
SENEGAL AT THE RECENT HRC SESSION. AMBASSADOR COHEN HAS  
ALREADY THANKED PRESIDENT SENGHOR ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT  
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CARTER FOR THE EXCELLENT WORK OF SENEGALESE CHIEF JUSTICE  
KEBA M'BAYE IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE HRC. YOU  
MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS WITH SENGHOR PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY AMONG NON-ALIGNED NATIONS. COOPER

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## Message Attributes

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